

SEQUOYA REVIEW

UTC's Annual Literary & Arts Magazine 2017

Thanks to Sarah Einstein, this year's advisor

A Statement from the Cover Artist: Sarah Bowers

“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”

-Mark Twain

Foreword

To borrow from our own Olivette Petersen's poem "Immortality," I truly believe that in this journal you will find "a million memories . . . a thousand pictures . . . a piece of yourself" – one that you're looking to share, and maybe some that you keep hidden. This journal is a stained-glass mosaic of stories true and imagined, and of artwork that speaks without words. These pages are inhabited by commonality, but also by an unfathomable number of totally unique experiences. They weave together in beautiful diversity. Making art is how we is how we explore what it means to live, and it's how we live forever.

Take a look.

Tara McGlocklin
Editor-in-Chief
Sequoia Review

Sequoia Review: A History

It was a busy time in the United States in 1965: Martin Luther King Jr. marched 25,000 people to the capital of Alabama; the U.S. authorized its first ground combat forces in Vietnam; Malcolm X was assassinated; The Who dropped their very first album; *The Sound of Music* was released in theaters; and the television soap opera *Days of Our Lives* premiered. It makes sense, then, that during this eclectic moment of history this magazine was born.

When faced with the turbulent world that the United States experienced in the sixties, many sought to express their feelings, protests, and critiques via art or the written word. It was a hard life then, before you could "tweet" your anxieties and receive instant gratification. At this point in time it was called *Echo Literary Magazine*, and it was published quarterly up until 1972—imagine, having to wait four months before seeing a printed version of your words. The audacity!

In 1975, this magazine was officially renamed *Sequoia Review*, which would serve as the permanent title for at least the next forty years. It is doubtful that the title will be changed in the future, for it both honors an important Cherokee contributor to the publishing realm, and because we have invested a fair amount of money in *Sequoia Review* buttons.

In all seriousness, this is a splendid publication. It has always been a fearless publisher of true and honest works from a variety of majors. It remains the hub of political, social, and cultural commentary that it was during its inception in 1965, while continuing to showcase the flourishing artistic abilities of this university. We are incredibly proud to say that the *Sequoia Review* is something that can be enjoyed no matter your field or background, which is something we are so incredibly proud to say.

So please, pull up a seat, and welcome us into your lives.

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WRITING

NOËL

Jake Freeman

It's Saturday night again.

He looks at the clock.

6:55 p.m.

He puts on his shoes, grabs his wallet and keys, and tugs his black Carhart jacket on over his old flannel shirt. He reaches into the inside pocket and pulls out a black wool beanie and tugs it over his head, tucking his ears beneath it.

By 6:57, great white clouds surround his head as he exhales the frigid night air. Small snowflakes fall to rest on his shoulders.

He rubs his reddened hands together and grumbles as the wind blows and burns his cheeks.

He looks up to find the windshield of his black Honda Civic already lightly covered. He tucks his right hand into his jacket sleeve and wipes the snow from the driver's side.

He grunts as he falls to rest in the driver seat. He twists the key in the ignition and holds it for a few seconds before the car finally turns over.

"Gotta rid of this damned thing," he whispers to himself.

It's a short ride to see his friends. He parks at the very front of the lot and climbs out of the car. The door creaks as it slams behind him.

He's inside by 7:00 and by 7:07, he's made his selections and taken his seat in the back left corner of the store: the seat hidden behind the shelf of World War I history books that never move.

He leans back into the leather chair and lifts his feet up onto the small oak table. Flakes of dirt sprinkle across the table as his once-black work-boots hit the surface.

He cups his hands and blows into them until they regain their feeling.

He cracks the book and finds his friends sitting in front of a massive computer monitor, at least 80 inches, and talking amongst themselves.

Hi, Bruce, Alfred.

Moments later, he's transported to a rooftop with a giant spotlight on top. Steam fills the air as snow hits its hot surface.

Hello, Jim.

Next, he finds himself in a futuristic car with more buttons and switches than the Millenium Falcon. There's a large computer screen on the dashboard displaying three young men's faces.

Hey, Dick, Tim, Damian. (Jason didn't show.)

A series of beeps comes from the pocket of his jeans and he sets the book down for a moment to check his cell phone.

New Message: Natalie. Received: 9:15 p.m.

"Flight leaves at 9. Should be there by 11:30. The kids can't wait to see their grandpa!"

He chuckles as he slides the phone back into his pocket, then stretches his legs out, slides a little further down into his seat, and sinks back into Bruce's stories.

They go to warehouses, banks, graveyards, a mansion, a cave, an asylum.

Every so often, he climbs out of the chair to take another trip up to the bookshelf to make another selection, only stopping to glance up to the window at the front of the store.

Snow falls endlessly. After a while, the window becomes too foggy to see out.

He heads back to his chair anyway.

After another long while, there's a scratch from the intercom and he hears a woman's soft, familiar voice.

"Good evening, Books-A-Million shoppers. The time is now 10:51 and your Books-A-Million store will close in nine minutes. Please make your final selections and bring them to the café register at the front of the store. We will reopen at 11:00 a.m. tomorrow morning. Thanks a million for shopping at Books-A-Million, and have a safe night."

He looks down. Three pages to go. He hurries and wraps them up just in time to hear that the store is closed.

He closes the book, thinking his goodbyes.

The final closure announcement is made over the intercom, and he pulls himself out of his seat. The leather squeaks as the cushion expands back to its normal size.

He walks back to the shelf and paces along it, placing each comicbook back in its proper location, saving the one he's decided to buy, then heads for the front.

As he approaches the register, he's greeted by the same familiar voice from the intercom.

A short, slender woman in a knee-length black dress and long brunette hair smiles at him.

"Hey Mr. Guinness. What are you doing out in this weather?"

"Oh, it's been a few hours. It wasn't too bad yet when I got here," he says as he hands her the book.

"I didn't see you come in. You must have slipped right by me. You tend to be pretty sneaky."

"Ah, the coffee shop was pretty backed up so I didn't want to bother you. I just went straight on back to my corner, outta the way."

"You and your corner. We make sure to keep that old chair there just for you. Is Ella coming in for the holidays?"

"Yeah, her and the kids will be in tomorrow around noon."

"Just in time for Christmas Eve then. Any big plans?"

"Nothing too special. Dinner, presents, that old cartoon I told you about. The kids like that."

"Christmas with the Joker,' right? You know I told Mark about that last Christmas and he freaked out. He'd forgotten all about that old show."

"It's the best. Your man's got good taste."

"Oh yeah. He hunted down the DVD so we could watch that episode on Christmas Eve last year. He's already had it sitting out on the cabinet for a week so we can watch it again this year. He seems to love every idea you tell me about."

"Well, it's tradition. Natalie and I always watched that episode around Christmas. Somebody's gotta carry it on."

He sees the girl's face flinch a little.

"Well, we're glad to do it," she says quickly as she hands him the plastic bag holding his book. "Have a good night, Mr. Guinness. Merry Christmas."

"Merry Christmas, Leslie," he says with a smile.

He opens the door and is met by the frigid December breeze. He tucks his hands into his coat pockets, the bag dangling from his wrist, and trudges towards his now completely white Honda Civic.

His face and hands burn as they start to swell. He shivers fiercely as he scrapes the snow and ice off his windshield yet again.

He turns and pries the car door open and flops down into the seat, tossing his bag onto the passenger seat where it lands on a pile of papers and brochures. He shakily crams the key into the ignition and twists. The engine sputters to life.

He turns the first knob on the heater up to the biggest red bar and then turns to second knob all the way up.

He sits there for a moment, basking in the blast of warm air.

After a moment, his face stops burning again. He pulls the shifter back to what's left of the "D3" label, eases on the gas, and heads for the exit.

He's halfway across the parking lot when he feels a bump and the car begins to rumble. He slows to a stop and climbs out of the car to find his rear driver-side tire deflated.

"The Batmobile lost a wheel...again," he thinks to himself.

He stumbles back to the trunk and retrieves the jack and spare tire. He slides the jack under the car and twists the wrench, raising it to the top. He slumps toward the wheel and loosens the bolts. He staggers to his feet and grabs the edge of the car to steady himself. Once he gains his balance, he gives the wheel a light kick and it pops loose.

Just as he pushes the spare tire on, he hears a car pull up next to him. He turns to see a red Ford Escape idling next to him. The driver's side window slides open and Leslie peers out of the car.

"Mr. Guinness? Everything okay?"

"Oh yeah, don't you worry. I'm good. Just had a flat."

"You shouldn't be out in this cold. Want me to call Mark? I don't know much about cars but I'm sure he wouldn't mind coming to help."

"Nah, no need. I'm about finished up now. Thank you though."

"You sure? He can be here in ten minutes. It isn't a big deal."

"Nah, it's okay. Natalie didn't know anything about 'em either, so this isn't my first time changing a tire on this old piece. Won't be the last either. You run on home now, Leslie. Be careful."

"Well, alright. You're sure you're okay?"

"Yeah, yeah. I'll have 'er done any minute. Go on home, Leslie. Merry Christmas.

"Merry Christmas, Mr. Guinness."

He picks up the wrench and twists the screws until he can't twist any further, then tosses it and the jack back in the trunk and slams the hatch.

He turns and reaches for the door handle when a single large snowflake lands on his nose.

He stops and turns around. Under the bright orange glow of the streetlight, he can see what looks like millions of little stars falling from the sky.

He holds out his hand and feels one flake land on the tip of his ring finger.

He looks down just in time to see it melting away.

He smiles.

"Merry Christmas, Natalie," he says aloud, looking back up into the sky.

He climbs into the old car, starts it back up, and pulls out onto the highway.

He leaves the store.

He leaves behind the pages of his beloved Gotham City.

He ventures back out into the bitter cold.

Yosemite Valley Cashier Summer

Alaina Krakowiak

Our friend Daniel burned his hands today
cleaning up the lunchtime grill.
No one taught him how to do it
the right way,
just handed him the chemicals—
the gloves were on the shelf.

He makes personal pizzas and greasy paninis
for antsy tourists with
unshakable, unbreakable plans to
“do Yosemite” in a weekend,
in a Saturday,
in the 2 ½ hours before
they head back to San Francisco,
maybe Fresno.

I stand behind a cash register
and slide groceries
across a scratched linoleum counter,
I turn boxes around in my hands
in search of bar codes.
beep, bag,
have a nice day.

My summer Valley home is swarming
with overweight squirrels,
fearless deer,
screaming-baby dripping-popsicle
crowded shuttle busses
and never ending lines—
Disneyland wilderness.

I sell 13 packs of cigarettes
to my night shift coworker

every week
with a smile.

And when I clock out at night
and step outside to breathe,
I look up
to find myself surrounded
by towering granite walls
I can't find the time to climb.
impending claustrophobia doom.

But what about the lonely high country?
so far from the crowded valley

We found our way,
way out there
together.

Curious pikas and marmots,
purple endless lupine,
fragile, meandering streams.

What about all of those things
we found
with our backpacks and boots,
our headlamps and our love?

Meadows spattered with
elevation dwarfed flowers,
glistening blue lakes
with swimming pool smooth
granite bottoms,
ragged peaks, weathered domes
we felt so alone.

There were no screen saver photos
taken out there, we had no
expectations.

Just backpack bruised bananas
and semi-frozen peanut butter scraped
with our cheap plastic multi tools.

Alaina Krakowiak

We shivered side by side
in the high Sierra chill
we didn't anticipate,
trudged up heinous hills,
and plunged into frozen
snowmelt lakes

while the white-knuckled grip
of beeping, bagging, tourism,
and nagging obligations
softened,
5-day headaches
dissipating.

But duty calls.
Name tags and khaki shorts,
clean hair and stiff collars,
this is real survival
minimum wage in a grocery store,
counting out the wasted dollars
of frustrated travelers,
falling asleep standing up
between transactions—
this is it.

“My First Summer in the Sierra”
bullshit, John Muir stories
wasted anticipations.
Now I know,

48 hours of freedom
can never get you far enough away.

Daniel cooks and cleans on,
hands wrapped in cheap tan bandages
and stuffed into thin plastic gloves,

while I just try to remember
to glance over my shoulder
when I catch a break between

transactions.

You can see Half Dome out the back
window,
see those last remnants
of the sunsets orange glow
trailing down and away
off its ancient face
disappointing sundial

this is it.

A Windstorm in Joshua Tree

Alaina Krakowiak

In this endless desert
long dormant seeds lie
hidden, waiting
beneath ancient sands
as I stand, barefoot
on sacred ground.

Cold mountains to the north
scalding sand down south
all the way to Mexico,
life persists in rain shadows.

Milky moonlight paints
silhouettes, famously strange
Joshua trees
across a sunset faded horizon

branches aimless,
ageless,
no growth rings
to tell their secrets

and we felt at home
in the black night desert,
this was not dead land, no
this was not cactus land.

somewhere among
the precarious balance of death
and life
we found peace.

But we were away
when the winds rolled in.

Powerful and indifferent
they reduced our little tent home
to crackling nylon forfeit flags
grotesquely bent poles
barely clinging to the earth.

and we retreated,
the backseat leather hideaway
all night rocked
by howling destroyer winds.

Sand in our eyes,
sand in our teeth
I smile and feel its grit
against my molars.

Go home, the desert land says.
You do not belong here, it says.
but we stay,
grinning
gripping each other's hands

just two dormant seeds
awoken,
blooming.

Alaina Krakowiak

Turbulence

William "Tripp" Woolf

coffee drunk, knuckles white on the
armrest and the sun in our slipstream,
I fly eastward. I dread getting in that
goddam car.

Dips and pulls and twists and
glides—seventy passengers in a Delta
Jet—below the grey tufted hide of the
storm. Raindrops jerk a heart rhythm
urgent on the thick porthole glass. The
fasten seat belt sign stays lit.

I hate the car into whose trunk
I will drop my luggage—two seats for
three person family—bought while I
absented overseas. Thunderbird never
meant to carry the three of us, never
meant to hold me. Not that I want to
be held, with my knees on the dash,
the seatbelt cutting red furrows into my
hips. I sink into the slick discomfort of
American leather seats— smells like a
grandmother's purse filled with make-
up splatters, tissues and old Certs. I
diminish in its confines, unwilling to
unfurl my spine, unwilling to shove my
head into the roof.

The plane flies like a boy
keeping a toy from his little sister. It
occurs to me that water-landing is an
oxymoron—and damned unlikely over
Oklahoma. We refuse to ascend, to climb
out of our present discomfort. Above us,
in the darkening sky, other passengers
in other planes fly in silken comfort.
Legs out, seat reclined, tray table stowed,

William "Tripp" Woolf

Deployment

William "Tripp" Woolf

The days and the days
settle under dust of storms,
gusts of wind, and relentless
uniformity—
a cat languishing asleep in the sun.
Your voice crackles over phone lines
monitored by bored operators dressed in
DC beltway cotton or polyester.
Your body lacks permanence,
diminishes over the sea—
Receding,
Ebbing,
to resurge
as handwriting on lined pages folded into
dusty envelopes
that smell faintly of a perfume you never
wore.
The days and the days
measure themselves
in lizard tails scurrying after sand flies
drunk on the orange light reflected off
plywood walls;
measure themselves
in footsteps along the boardwalk outside
my door,
or explosions along the perimeter—
mostly in footsteps.

The first grade drawings pinned over
my bunk get better in line quality, more
realistic,
Become monochromatic.
Green fades from the sky to take its

rightful place among the trees and the
grass;
my face smiles back at me,
flesh colored, peach instead of blue.
My arms remember the feel of her six
year-old body
the way an itch remembers an amputated
foot.
The days and the days
lose themselves in themselves
under a Persian sun—
under the dust.
There is no grass here—
and we lose ourselves
into ourselves.

William "Tripp" Woolf

SAY YES

Danny Giraldo

become like water,
 flowing down
 along its course of least resistance,
 and say yes to everything:
 to being aware of the universe
 and the awakening it brings;
 to allowing an energy potential
 to finally become kinetic;
 to becoming a leaf,
 instead of remaining a rock,
 upon impact with the waiting waters below.

as a rock,
 life is but a series
 of opportunistic leaps
 taken during an uncontrollable tumble
 down a mountain,
 while seeking incessantly
 for something—anything
 to serve as a foothold.
 But by allowing one's self
 to be carried downstream,
 one's purpose transforms,
 from merely taking leaps,
 into diving courageously off waterfalls.

Danny Giraldo

Vital Matters of the Mundane

Savannah Bennett

Along the countertop of the bathroom sink, each item has its place, and the place in which each item is kept does not differ. From left to right: the eye makeup remover is next to the facial toner, the facial toner is next to the face wash, the face wash is next to the hydrator mask (prescription only due to chronic dryness – to be used once a week), the hydrator mask is next to the moisturizer (not prescription – to be used daily), the moisturizer is next to the acne medicine (main ingredient benzoyl peroxide), the acne medicine is next to the stress relief hand soap from Bath & Body Works with eucalyptus and spearmint (still determining whether said hand soap is a placebo or not – leaning towards yes), and the sink sits in the very center. Colgate spearmint toothpaste sits behind the sink with the dentist issued toothbrush (Dr. John S. Mackenzie, DDS). Just past the sink in the lineup comes makeup sitting in order of application: primers, foundations, concealers, (to compensate for varying skin differences throughout the year i.e. winter skin vs. summer skin, multiples are necessary for the first items) bronzer, contour (slightly darker than bronzer) blush, eye primer, eye shadow palettes (all varying shades of brown), eye liner, mascara, highlight , lipsticks and then

the oval glass vase (12 inches long, 3 inches wide) where my makeup brushes are held. The last item on the countertop is the Secret Coconut Splash deodorant used last in order so the scent is fresher. It sits beside the oval vase for it is oval in shape and looks best there. However, on this particular Monday, the space in which it lives is hollow.

It is 10:22 am and I now have exactly 8 minutes before I have to leave my apartment to make it to class on time. The thought of putting my bare hands on the bathroom floor makes my breathing begin to climb. I grab a pair of latex gloves from the drawer on the left hand side of the sink and step on the shower rug making sure to keep my body confined to the 3-foot by 2-foot rectangle. The only other place the deodorant could hide in my bathroom is the small crevice under the countertop that has about a 1-inch blind spot for small unruly items. Seeing that it's not under the countertop I switch to plan B. It is now 10:24.

In my apartment I luckily got the master bedroom in which the bathroom is attached. My sister has a bathroom of her own, and because most guests don't know I have a bathroom hidden behind the closets in my room, they use hers and not mine. Juno has a remarkable tendency to destroy my belongings. In the spirit of her nature, I have no other option but to tackle the recesses in which she resides. In her bathroom from left to right: there is dry shampoo (the cap is gone) a conglomerate of makeup tools, (brushes, mascara, eyeliner, lipsticks, an

open compact of powder—you name it—is all compiled in one heap), an Aveeno face wash, a roll of toilet paper (not on the dispenser) and her blow-dryer (which was plugged in, and the cord ran from one end of the counter to the other). Still no deodorant in sight.

“Juno.” No answer. “Juno!” Still no answer. From her bathroom I burst into her room from across the hall. She is getting ready for work, and is still in a groggy daze from sleep or the lack thereof. It is now 10:27.

“Juno, have you seen my deodorant? It’s not where I keep it.”

She steps into her black dress pants and stumbles a bit as she picks up each foot.

“Oh yeah, I had to borrow it last night when you were asleep. I took a shower and realized I ran out. It’s over here.”

My breathing begins to quicken as she walks at a glacial pace to her nightstand where, lo and behold, my deodorant lies.

“You used it.” I said staring at the tube of tainted antiperspirant sitting in the wrong place beside her bedside.

“Yeah, don’t freak out or anything, but I have to use it again today since I still don’t have any. I’ll pick some up today though.” She raises her right arm and glides the stick across her under arm. I watch in horror and she switches to the other side and repeats the process. As I watch her apply the deodorant to her own skin, I can see the manifestation of her germs infecting the antiperspirant. Each individual germ taunts me with a chorus of laughter as she places the stick back into my hand. My hand tenses around

the newly-found coconut scented colony on the island of ‘this was mine’. I hold it out straight in front of me.

“You USED it.” My heart pumped faster inside my chest as the room turned red.

“Ashley, dude, I’ll pick some up today. Chill out. God.” I stand in my spot as I watch her walk into her bathroom to continue getting herself ready for work. After I regain composure, I walk into her bathroom straight to the sink and turn the water on as hot as it will go.

“Ashley get out! I’m gonna be late for work! Move!” I run the deodorant under the steaming water until it melts away the outer layer of coconut scented talc. It is now 10:29. I shake the water droplets free from the stick and also use the air as a means to cool it down. I hesitantly lift my shirt in order to reach my under arm and use the deodorant.

“Oh my god, are you for real right now? Get out of my bathroom.” I slam the deodorant on the counter in front of her.

“This one is yours, you buy ME a new one today.” I throw my latex gloves, which are still on my hands in her general direction. Storming out of her bathroom I hear her yell

“Holy shit, anything for you princess!” I grab my water bottle from the kitchen counter, and slam the door behind me. It is now 10:31.

Humanity

Savannah Bennett

Maybe, we move faster than we know.
 It's inevitable to fear oblivion
 When we live in a world of infinite possibilities.
 Someone could die tomorrow
 Someone could break your heart
 Someone could discover the cure for cancer
 Not every possibility is bad

We are creatures of habit.
 Wake up-breathe-eat-sleep-wake up-breathe-eat-sleep
 Thus, proving our vulnerability towards acceptance.
 We don't want to accept change
 That breaks the barrier of routine
 God forbid someone change to be different
 If so may they be murdered by society's standards

We are all different in appearance.
 We are all the same anatomically.
 We all breathe air.
 We all feel pain.
 We all love deeply no matter the sex.
 Our hearts beat in time until they cease to sound.

Maybe we are bigger than we know,
 But maybe we're not big at all.
 Maybe our picture is still being painted,
 But maybe it was finished long ago and now fades away.
 Maybe, we all have a defined destiny,
 But maybe we will never know what lies beyond
 Until our internal drum plays its final song.

Savannah Bennett

Sunset/Sunrise Dominatrix

Jeremy "JB" Beck

Lindsay served me again. 5:27 am. Los Angeles.
Outside, a resemblance of dawn was flung into the horizon
like the glow of a Chinese lantern.

I ordered pastrami on rye with a side of fries.

Lindsay wore her hair in a ponytail.
It was like a cat o nine tails had been bleached in saffron.

An apron sheathed her thighs,
legs permanently flexed like a lioness.

Down south were calves that could pump iron on Dianabol.

Her smile commanded intensity, a strobe
in a garage at midnight.

Her breath smelled of strawberries wrapped
in fruitstripe gum. I learned this
as demands were hissed into my ear.

6:13 am. Los Angeles. I walked with Lindsay down an alley.
We strolled as California ejaculated a sunrise.

We stopped.

Lindsay gazed at me the way a constrictor gazes at the rabbit.
Her eyes captured the spectrum of a thousand sunsets.

My heart raced like a falcon on Dexedrine.

The wolf lunged.
The mauling began.

Jeremy "JB" Beck

Silent But Deadly

Reegan Bryant

He's just standing there
like an unfinished sentence.
I can't breathe.

Sitting on a cold metal table,
staring at my chipped, brown, toe nail polish,
dangling my legs off the edge, waiting.
I feel as if I am twelve years old again
dreading the infamous finger prick.
It's just a check up.

The door opens slowly,
not expecting to see
tattooed arms hidden slightly by a white coat,
oh God, his scrubs
just tight enough.
When was the last time you have seen
a beautiful doctor under 35? Never.
If Hercules and Angelina Jolie created a love child,
THIS would be him.

Now I have to let him put a stethoscope
to my chest and listen to my heartbeat.
I wonder if he has ever heard a heart like mine?
Who am I kidding
of course every women's heartbeat
that has graced his stethoscope
sounds identical to my palpitations, uneven and irregular.
Can stethoscopes hear everything?
Telling myself that my heartbeat is masking any other sound.

Praying that this one slip just scurries away,
not stopping to let its legs and body

Reegan Bryant

pierce the septum of our noses.
I refuse to move hoping to just trap the stench
underneath me.
Those extra pounds coming in handy.
He's asking me to stand up and touch my toes.
False alarm,
It was a joke.
He has a terrible sense of humor,
or really bad timing.

Regret is all that consumes my thoughts,
were the nachos, quesadilla,
and taco really worth it last night?

Reagan Bryant

Love Cannot Hide

William Spradlin

Nothing can hide in the waters
Touched by the surface of the sun
While all that is life celebrates her glorious splendor.
She climbs the crest of an anxious wave
Thirsting the touch of the darkening shore
Gaining then Crashing the shallows
Among the spoiled rocks
She disperses her energy high among the heavens
With a whisper
She again is drawn to the comforts of the deep.
All the while I'm waiting and eager
Spanning my arms to a boundless horizon.
She once again turns for the shore
I watched the peculiar stones burst into tears I
tasted the saltiness of the fog dimmed light
I struggled to maintain balance in the break.
Her song pounded upon an empty beach
Until the water trickled the color of pearl
Somewhere a coconut falls quick into the sand
Was this love
That washed away your footprints

William Spradlin

The Thing with Feathers

Sara Serkownek

The first swan appeared in Kensington Gardens on November 23, 1966. Richard knew this because he saw it happen. He made it happen.

It was Richard's eleventh birthday and his mother had brought him to the park to celebrate. But instead of enjoying the fresh air, Richard was sulking by the Long Water, annoyed that his parents hadn't gotten him the skateboard he'd asked for. Richard's mother had bought him a croissant and left him alone to pout with the ducks and coots. Normally this would have made Richard feel a little better, but—perhaps sensing his bad mood—the water birds were giving him a wide berth. So now he was annoyed with the birds and his parents. He wished...

Wait. That was it. He could wish for a skateboard. After all, what were lakes but just really big, natural fountains?

He scrounged through his pockets for change, but only came up with a couple of pieces of lint and the remains of an old chewing gum wrapper. Well, the croissant had cost money. Certainly that had to count for something. And so he settled on wishing on the last bit of his breakfast. And, if nothing else, it would at least make the birds a little more entertaining.

"I wish I had a skateboard," he whispered, and heaved the compressed

piece of croissant as far as his young desperation could drive it.

The bread landed with a soft plop behind the birds. None of them even gave it a glance.

"C'mon, go get it," he encouraged, "Someone should get what they want on my birthday."

The ducks ignored him.

"There's a hunking piece of food right there and none of you are even eating it!"

Still no response from the waterfowl. Richard, now feeling like a total idiot, huffed and glared towards his wasted treat. Except where he had expected to see a soggy wad of dough, there now floated a huge, pure white swan.

Richard gaped. The swan looked coolly back.

"But... w-where did you come from?" Richard said.

Honk, said the swan, rather smugly. The ducks bobbed in agreement.

Richard looked wildly around, but no one else was even in sight. It was a rather dreary Wednesday morning and this section of the park was completely empty. There was no one there but him, the familiar birds, and the newly materialized swan, which was now bottoms-up, rooting for bugs. Richard stared at the swan—and the swan pointedly ignored Richard—until he felt a hand on his shoulder. He started guiltily and looked up.

"Richard!" his mother snapped, "I called for you the whole time I was walking down here, what were you doing? We need to catch the train."

Sara Serkownek

"I was—"

"Oh, beautiful," she sighed, looking away from him, "When did they get swans?"

The next day, a skateboard arrived for Richard with the post. His parents agreed that it must be a birthday present from his uncle in Cornwall. After all, there was no other explanation.

Richard learned quickly that his newfound powers came with some strings, as these things usually tend to.

For one, he couldn't just lob some food into any old puddle of water and expect a swan to appear and his wish to be granted. The food had to be bread and the bread had to be thrown into the Long Water in Kensington Gardens. And if any birds—even the swans created from previous wishes—snatched up the bread too quickly, then his wish wouldn't be granted. As Richard had more and more wishes granted and so more and more swans appeared, it became much harder to have a new wish granted. The swans were always waiting for him—no matter which bank he tried to wish from—and they were incredibly adept at catching the bread he threw. Richard soon began taking whole loaves of bread so he could distract the swans with a few morsels before hurriedly wishing on a piece and chucking it in the opposite direction.

He also discovered that even though his wishes always came true, they weren't granted in any sort of subtle, logical way that would be easily accepted by his parents. All of the smaller things he wished for (new shoes like his friend Terrence's, money, a television, an Oyster card so he could easily get to Kensington

Gardens, more bread, a football, etc.) just arrived in the post.

His parents assumed that Richard was writing to his uncle asking for presents and, when questioned, Richard fully confessed to this scheme. After that nerve-wracking lie, Richard took to waking up early and grabbing the post before his parents got out of bed. He then just had to keep the product of the wish hidden from his parents, which wasn't exactly easy. After Richard's mother literally stumbled across his new football (which he said he borrowed from Terrence and resulted in Richard giving his brand new ball to Terrence the next day at school), Richard resolved to only wish for things that weren't so corporeal.

This turned out to be a less than perfect solution. When Richard wished for a high mark on a math test that he was sure he had failed, the test came back with an A, but none of the answers had been changed to correct. On top of that, the teacher clearly remembered that Richard had gotten a C- and when she went to hand him the paper, she was totally baffled. After a few tense seconds, she blamed the incorrect letter on her habit of grading after having a glass of wine and just replaced the unearned grade with the deserved C-.

The next time he felt like he'd scored badly, Richard raced to wish that all of the answers on his test were correct. This might have worked if the test wasn't on long division; as it was, he ended up with the correct answers, but all of the wrong work. The teacher assumed he had cheated and placed him in detention. Richard spent his punishment coming to terms with the fact that wishes maybe weren't the best way to get through school.

So Richard resolved to make no more wishes until one was absolutely necessary.

Richard was small boy; skinny, with legs and arms that he still hadn't grown into. Even at fourteen, when other boys were sprouting scraggly beards and several inches of height, Richard stayed the same and tried his best to just weave through the legs of his classmates in gym class. Despite being a traditionally easy target, Richard got along well with his bigger classmates, due to his amicable nature and cheerful humor. He had progressed through his school years making relatively few enemies and only undergoing the normal amount of teasing and bullying that young boys enact upon each other.

At least until Tommy Williams arrived.

Tommy was the only kid smaller than Richard, but what he lacked in size he made up for in raw malice. He had a wiry strength built from his love of climbing trees and spending every spare bit of time swinging through branches. Minutes after introducing himself to the class, Tommy began to mercilessly torment Richard, who lacked the cruelty and strength required to defend himself verbally or physically. As a result, Richard spent the better part of Year 10 enduring constant ridicule and recess beatings. The teachers were oblivious, as there is no one less willing to ask for help than a teenage boy. Richard's friends disappeared, as some found a perverse amusement in it all and some were just afraid of registering on Tommy's radar. Richard was Tommy's sole target, so he couldn't even forge a sort of trench friendship with other victims. Richard

was powerless.

Except he wasn't. Not really.

Richard stood uncertainly on the bank of the Long Water. Thirty-two swans were scattered throughout the various ponds in Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park. Only twelve had bothered to approach him on this visit. They paddled around, chasing away the pigeons and coots, occasionally letting out a loud trumpet. They didn't seem too impatient for food, which was good because even after days of deliberation, a forty minute ride on the Underground, and a ten minute walk, Richard still wasn't entirely sure what to wish for. To be stronger? Meaner?

He tossed a few chunks of bread to the waiting swans. When they were distracted, he hurled a piece away from them.

"I wish that Tommy Williams can't hurt me."

For a few seconds, the bread floated on the surface, then it became too waterlogged and began to sink.

And became a black swan.

Richard gaped. All of his previous wishes had yielded white swans. Sure, they were different sizes and had individual markings on their beaks and feet, but every last one of them was as white as his mother's nice tablecloth.

Richard knew that he had done something terrible. The feeling was affirmed in the swan's eyes, which were locked with his own. Those eyes embodied the hate that had created them.

Richard stumbled backwards, breaking from that terrible stare. He dropped the rest of the bread, turned,

and sprinted out of the park, ignoring the few people who called out to ask if he was okay. He spent the next week in bed as his baffled parents tried to figure out how to break his stupor. They couldn't even get him up to attend the funeral.

I lounged in the grass and watched the old man feed the swans. He stood alone, dressed in a long sleeve white button-up shirt and black slacks despite the unusually warm weather. He had brought an entire loaf of bread for the birds, unlike the heels or moldy half loafs that people usually fed them. Occasionally groups of people would gather around him, taking photos and attempting to draw him into conversation. His responses must have been unrewarding, though, as no one stuck around. He seemed to prefer the company of the swans anyways. There were at least twelve of them, a veritable flock. They stood and flapped their huge wings, dispelling the ducks and pigeons, white feathers falling in flurries.

I wandered over next to him, half out of curiosity, half out of a desire to take a picture for Instagram. He didn't say anything to me, just focused on the swans. He fed them straight from his hand, undaunted by their size and surprising ferocity. He cooed to them like they were children as they snapped and fought over a morsel. He seemed to know and love every one.

Or almost every one. A single black swan floated behind the others, regarding the frenzy with a disturbingly human look of disdain. Curiously, the

old man didn't toss any bread to the black swan like he did to the others that were stuck in the back. He seemed to be as pointedly ignoring it as it was pointedly ignored him.

For a moment, the black swan drifted across the old man's line of sight. Suddenly his face contorted with unfathomable pain and regret. I took a step forward and reached out, thinking he was having a stroke or something, but before I could say a word he was back to normal, calmly tossing bread into the water. I dropped my hand and turned to leave, completely unnerved.

It was only later that evening, when I was comfortable at home, that I regretted not asking him about it.

Tommy Williams loved to climb trees. An odd habit for a boy in London, but he pursued it enthusiastically, scrambling up every tree he could find. He also loved to swing from branch to branch, then hang still and drop himself onto the head of any adult, child, or dog who happened to walk below him. He had no fear of heights and no concept of how much weight a branch could support. So when Tommy toppled out of a tree to his death, no one was really that surprised.

Least of all Richard.

A Courting Notice for Shia LaBeouf

Landon Finke

I want you to dig hole after hole
In my heart.
Carve me up like the Battlefield of Verdun.
For my treasure
Will take more than a shovel
And a bated breath full of onions
To soothe the poisonous Lizards
Nestled into my (treasure) Chest.

Shia

I want you to blow up my cell phone
Every thirty seconds
Like the short but somehow bottomless wells
That are Michael Bay action sequences.
Actually, make it thirty-one seconds.
It has to be prime, after all,

Shia

You're my Optimus.

Landon Finke

The Herpes Monologues

Landon Finke

I'm Cold.

Like the Terminator
Searching for Sarah Connor.
Except, I can't be blown up
By pipe bombs or mashed
By hydraulic presses.
And unlike the Terminator,
I will ALWAYS be back.

I'm Sore.

Like your larynx
After a shouting match
That was set to go twelve rounds,
But was promptly called
After the classic
Left Hook-Nuclear Bomb Combo of
"Fuck you,
Why didn't you tell me?"

So make like a Randy Orton R.K.O.
victim and "Watch out! Watch out!"
Cuz' I'm just one lackadaisical latex
Away from dotting your lips
Like a U.S Naval Commander
Playing Battleship.

Landon Finke

Unseen Highways

J. Allen Steiman

I saw a man die yesterday. I don't want to talk about it, so maybe I should write. I don't want to write about it either. He died in a puddle of gasoline, with strangers pumping at his chest. No pulse. No pulse. Four gasping breaths when I got here. Now, no pulse. Why does she have to call them gasping breaths? Over and over, "Four gasping breaths!" I hate death. He died in a pool of gasoline, while I held his motorcycle upright and three strangers pumped at his chest. My girlfriend was one of them. I'm proud of her for being brave. I wish we hadn't been there at all.

Earlier we saw the world from the tallest peak in Georgia. We saw seven green states like a sea roiling beneath us. I wondered how many towns were hidden amongst the waves. How many unseen highways? Brasstown Bald is the name of the place. Elevation: 4,783 feet. I bought a patch in the gift shop, to sew onto my coveralls. The woman at the register saw our helmets. "Be careful on that motorcycle," she said, "we see a lot of deaths up here." I told her I would be. We took off our leathers and hiked to the top. The world is beautiful from the tallest peak in Georgia.

It's 127 miles from Chattanooga to Brasstown Bald. We argued within the first fifteen. She couldn't hold the

directions still in the wind, and we missed our exit. I yelled at her and she yelled back. We had a good time after that, until we saw a man die. That was on the way back. We were silent for the last 70 miles.

I don't know his name, the man that died. He had a grey beard and a leather jacket too thick to cut off. I was afraid I'd stab him in my attempt, so I put my knife back in its sheath. I don't know CPR. I do know how to lift a fallen motorcycle. I picked it up to stop the leaking gasoline, and watched the others try to save his life.

We had dinner in Blairsville, Georgia. Nearly all of the little town square was closed, because it was Sunday evening. We ate at Papa's Pizza To Go. I don't know why it's called "To Go," because there was plenty of seating inside. We ate a pizza with grilled chicken and ranch on it and quietly loved each other. Adventures are rare in our busy lives — mostly we read or sleep when we're together. Brasstown Bald was a surprise for her. She had been asking to go to Fall Creek Falls, but I thought the Bald would be better. Maybe I should have taken her to Fall Creek Falls after all.

His legs were crossed at the ankle and spread at the knees, and there was a hole ripped in the groin of his jeans. His manhood hung out; skin that should have been pink was mottled black. One testicle dangled from a torn sack. I looked at the speedometer of his Harley, at the broken glass that must have torn him open. I watched them pump his chest, I looked between his legs, I

J. Allen Steiman

thought that he would be better off dead. I held the motorcycle up, and didn't look away until the ambulance arrived.

After dinner, we turned toward home. It had been a good day. Headed west on highway 64, I could barely make out the group of cars stopped in the road. I pulled over behind them. The low sun was melting into the pavement, and centered in the orange glow was the silhouette of a woman performing CPR. I felt dread, not for the accident, but for the fact that I was privy to it. I sat there and wished I was somewhere else. When I turned to talk to my girlfriend she was gone. Her silhouette had joined the others. I'm proud of her. She seems to be okay. I am not okay. She is braver than I am.

I joined her, tried to cut off his jacket, got scared and stopped. Picked up his motorcycle. Stood and watched. The motorcycle had run right into the back of a truck, made invisible by the setting sun. The truck's bumper was crushed all the way up to the rear tires. There was another man just standing, like me. Watching. His face told me it was his truck. I hate death, and I think he did too. We both watched. We listened to them say things like "no pulse," and "four gasping breaths." Two ambulances and three police cars arrived. An officer asked if I had seen what happened. I hadn't. I told him about the setting sun.

I wanted to move the motorcycle to the grass, because I couldn't put it down without leaking more gas and I wanted to get the hell away from there. The officer told me it had to stay where it was

until the state troopers got there, but he could hold it until then. They loaded the man into the ambulance. It was without hurry. I thanked the officer and we left.

I saw a man die yesterday. He died in a puddle of gasoline, while I held his motorcycle upright and three strangers took turns pumping at his chest, and his dignity drained away through a ragged hole in his jeans and the sun sank into the green sea that surrounds the highest mountain peak in Georgia.

Insulated

Jeremiah Johnson

Driving home this April evening,
Weaving over, under and around
On foliage shrouded backroads
To the sensuous insects' sound
And to *Songs My Mother Taught Me*,
And, dipping in to shaded groves,
I muse on what the early settlers
Must have felt at plodding through
Such glens, with dark descending
Round them, laid bare to nature
On horseback or in horse-drawn
Carriage, mulling slowly over each
Slanting sun-ray, each dark shade –
Like Ichabod astride his noble steed,
His reedy whistling in the gloom –
Uninsulated by the steel and speed
Which safeguard me from mystery.

Jeremiah Johnson

Notes: Dvorak wrote “Songs,” and Ichabod was the main character in Washington Irving’s, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

Paradise – Experienced and Longed-for

Jeremiah Johnson

On this warm, jovial day –
Commemorating another country's nationhood –
We gaze down, suspended
From this bridge, on mountain
Stream boulders and on bathers –
Splashing up-current,
Stretched, lying in shade
Or in patches of sunlight,
Sipping wine or picnicking in the coolness –
In bands, as families and as lovers,
screaming among their fellows,
Imbibing this bright paradise.

Looking at this verdure,
At the enfolding, glorious greenery, I'm
reminded of Eden – of that first
Man and woman who, surely,
Basked in similar fashion,
Waded laughingly up cool
Mountain streams – sat together, joyously winded,
On foam-wet boulders while
Eating the fruit of the vine.
And I wonder at what must be lost
In this present paradise,
Compared with what they knew.

Notes: The title is a spin-off of Milton's epic poems, "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained." We took this outing on "Canada Day" when my Mom and sister were here. Of course, it wasn't "another" country's celebration for Amy. The line "screaming among their fellows" is from William Cullen Bryant's poem, "To a Waterfowl" – my favorite line in one of my favorite poems.

Lady

Adam Jones

This place is not okay
 (run away)
 I don't like running,
 to a crowd with people
 and familiar voices.
 I see a dusty teddy bear meant for hugs
 but the smell won't scrape off his shoulders,
 reminding him that he won't ever find a hug.
 I want belonging
 like that glass of wine
 waiting for its drunkard
 to soak in a memory that he won't forget.
 What a perfect day
 to fall asleep, forget.
 To break off that kiss
 To stop swimming against the current.
 (Don't give up)
 I can chose which pen I will write
 which beverage I will drink.
 which song I will listen to.

Shh.. I hear her.
 She is a smooth stream.
 Quiet, yet loud, prettier
 than the pink sunset fading into the earth,
 reflecting upon innocent lakes.
 She's a restless overflowing waterfall.
 She draws in the weak, like a relentless undertow
 Being sucked into a crashing wave.
 Her voice captures those who get close.
 She's as large as Tennessee valleys.
 All the creatures know her name.
 She's hungry, but can't stop

eating and devouring.
 I am tired
 (Don't stop)
 Of running
 away from her voice,
 hiding from one forest to the next,
 tripping over roots.
 I hear her whisper through the disrupting breeze,
 distracting me from my sleep.
 (Go to sleep)
 Beautiful scarlet mistress,
 I know you too well.
 You wicked whore,
 knocking, knocking
 (She will leave)
 I won't answer the door

Adam Jones

Toboggan

Trevor Harper

I sat there cozy in the backseat of the car, bundled up in my jacket and toboggan as we drove into the city. It was getting close to Christmas and many of the buildings that we passed by on the interstate were decorated with white snowflakes and small green elves and had fat guys in Santa costumes waving to us in the cold. My parents were tense, not saying much of anything as we drove. I slid my hand under my toboggan and felt the baby smooth patch of skin on my crown. I rarely took my toboggan off. It had become a special piece of protection for me, shielding me from people's stares.

We drove up to the doctor's office: a small brown building that was next to about half a dozen others. It could have easily been mistaken for a mall had all the costumers not looked so sick. I slide my hand back out of my toboggan before my parents could see.

We went into the waiting room and signed in. My mom sat in the chair, worried what might happen next, her long blonde hair covering her face. She had been diagnosed with some disorder that makes you grow bone spurs four years, when I was in the second grade. She feared that this new bald patch might mean I had come down with something similar. My dad put his arm around her and let out a heavy sigh. I didn't really see what the big deal was. It was hair. It would grow back. It hadn't

fallen out or anything.

A small dark haired lady came out and motioned us to come back, taking my weight, height, etcetera — the same vitals all the doctors had been taking for the last several weeks before they poked and prodded me for a bunch of things that I had never heard of, searching for an answer. Then she led us back into a small room where she motioned me onto the bed that seemed to be standard in all doctors' offices: a small table you laid down on surrounded by two or three chairs.

"The doctor will be with you in a second," she said as she gave me a comforting smile.

As the door shut, I slid my hand back under my toboggan to take another feel of the silky plane that sat on the center of my head.

"Quit that, Trevor. You don't want any more of it to fall out!" my dad hissed.

My mom sat there and began to cry, sobbing between breaths. She had seen in a bunch of online forums of people with her disease that their kids usually had something too, so I must have been a goner in her mind.

The doctor came in, another small dark haired woman. "What am I seeing you for today?" She asked.

Suddenly my stomach sank and I was breathing nervously, each new breath bringing a new sense of shame.

I removed my toboggan, my protector, and leaned my head over.

"It's just been like that for weeks now, getting worse every week," my mom croaked.

She put on two blue gloves and parted through my hair. Then she examined my arms, legs, stomach. She asked me to pull down my pants. “Just a quick peek,” she smiled. I quickly pulled them back up.

“Well,” she said. “It’s not completely bald. It’ll grow back. If I had to say, it looks like alopecia, where your hair just falls out in patches. There’s nothing we can do for it, but I have some shots that will speed up the growth that’s already there” she smiled. But I already knew that it would grow back.

Neither of my parents looked too thrilled, but they looked somewhat relieved. They had feared a lot worse. I wondered what my dad thought. It was just a few hours earlier I told him what was really happening.

I sat on the couch, twirling and twirling and twirling my hair until one hair strand stuck out a tad more than the rest. I grabbed it, pulled, and pluck; it was out. It was one of the many countless others that had come out already, sometimes making the couch look like something had been shedding. I knew I should be wearing my toboggan. It helped, but it didn't seem to fully stop it.

I looked at the clock, dreading that in a few hours I would be seeing a doctor about this. I didn't know which was worse, having something medically wrong, or this. I had wanted to tell someone for months, but it just wouldn't come out. Was I alone? None of the other kids at school seemed to have a bald spot on the top of their heads. I wished I could stop and be like all the rest of them. Who pulls their hair out? But something

about it seemed almost too automatic, too right. If I even thought about pulling it, the spot on my scalp seemed to tingle, as if almost waiting on me to pull one out. I wished it was somewhere else. Under my arms. Around my feet. Somewhere where it wouldn't be broadcasted for the world to see.

My dad walked into the room and I quickly put my hand down. I took a deep breath. I began to tear up.

“Dad, I don’t want to go to the doctor,” I said, my voice trembling as if something was trying to fly out from my throat.

“You have to go. We have to find out what’s with your hair.”

I paused. “I-I-I’m pulling it out. Everyday. I can’t stop.”

He sat there for a moment. “Trevor, I’m not buying it. You have to go to the doctor. You can’t chicken out now.”

The doctor came in with four large shots with four equally long needles.

“Just a second,” she said as delivered the first one. It felt like any shot, but with a lot more pressure under the skin. The skin was so tight. It felt like a knot was under it. She followed it with three more.

“There you go. It’s not so bad,” she said patting me lightly on the back.

As we drove, I put my hand back under my toboggan and felt the four small lumps that interrupted the otherwise flat and polished patch of skin. My parents didn’t seem to notice, as the worst was now over.

When we got home, the sky had already darkened and the porch light

clicked on as we approached it. I took off my toboggan as we got inside. Then the sinking feeling hit me again and it wouldn't go away. I went into my room and shut my door, not even saying good night to my parents. I sat there in the dark and began to cry. I cried and cried and cried, biting my pillow to muffle the noise. I prayed the shots worked and worked fast. I still had the toboggan in my hands. I clenched it. I couldn't imagine life without it. But it would be getting warmer, and I would have to find a new way to hide.

If only it would stay cold forever.

Trevor Harper

Hummingbird House

Mikaela J. Smith

The house where I grew up was colored
 like petals of a hydrangea in summer.
 In the backyard,
 hummingbirds gathered
 like a band of drummers,
 beating their wings against the wind.
 The hummingbirds always found the
 nectar
 Mom left for them
 in the jar hung from the tree –
 the tree whose petals I used to pick
 and give to neighbors
 and throw in the wind
 and watch fall back to earth
 like a bird jumping from the nest
 for the first time.
 As I grew,
 those hummingbirds grew too.
 Press your ear to my chest.
 You can still hear their wings beating
 inside of me.
 I used to climb trees
 and rest while I watched those birds
 dart amongst currents of wind
 in the backyard of that house –
 the house where I grew up,
 the house that was colored
 like petals of a hydrangea in summer.

Mikaela J. Smith

Basic and Hipster Girls are Simply Girls.

Caitlyn Killen

“Oh my God, look at her. Style on fleek. Not.
Trying to be a little hipster. Totes Adorbs.”
Ombre hair, usually draping over shoulders or in a totally planned “messy bun.”
Apple Electronics, Apple everything.
Hunter rainboots and Uggs.
Lily Pulitzer and monograms.
Leggings, Oversized t-shirts.
Jorts, Nike Elite socks.
White Converse and infinity scarves.
North Face backpacks.
Starbucks drinks and Camelbak water bottles.
Patagonia vests and pearl earrings.

“Pssh. Like, who do these basic girls think they are?
Definitely not original. I’m truly authentic.”
Caramel macchiato from local coffee shop.
Wears olive green, maroon, earthy tones.
Glasses with bigger lenses, usually black or brown frames.
Low booties, with a thick heel that echoes on hard floors when walking.
Second-hand sweaters and denim jackets.
Vegan. Vegetarian. Buddhist.
Save the Earth, recycle.
Opinionated, has septum or hoop nose ring.
Apple Electronics, Apple everything.
Ombre hair, usually draping over shoulders or in a totally planned “messy bun.”

The two girls wait in line for their textbooks,
Eyes gazing up and down at each other, labeling automatically.
Then, the girls notice:
The same
Pandora ring.
The same
Textbooks.
They have the same
Major.

Caitlyn Killen

Poppop Talks About Old Age

Caithlyn Killen

Growing old, it's a son of a gun.

Before you could get up, get your coffee, maybe go fishing, even go to Dairy Queen.

Now, it's "Did you take your pills?" "Did your bowels move?"

"Is today the day you have your eye appointment?"

Hard to accept that your body's gonna change.

When you shave, you see your skin hanging down where there used to be muscle.

It creeps up on ya, slow and sure, age does. Thank God I'm not a mechanic anymore,

I'd be going to the doctor instead!

But it's not all bad, I promise ya that.

I was lucky, I've been all over the place.

It's real neat watching the grandchildren grow up. To hold them when they were little babies, like pups.

Even now when they are old enough to look after themselves I still like to slip them a twenty for gas money sometimes.

My wife Cathy takes care of me a lot more now. We look out for each other.

She loses her glasses, I help her find 'em. I forget to check my sugar, she reminds me.

You become more attached. Oh, hang on, she's calling me.

"Kenny! Oh, Kenny you know what you forgot to get the ice cream!"

Damn, I knew I forgot something. Maybe after I go to the A&P I can go to Dairy Queen and surprise her with a dilly bar, her favorite.

Yeah, I think she would like that.

Caithlyn Killen

The Beginner's Guide to Awkward Church Interaction

Landon Finke

Nothing goes together quite like church and awkward social interaction. It's like peanut butter and jelly, but instead of being filled by a heavenly warmth inside the insatiable furnace that is your stomach, you are filled with an existential dread that could make the Pope question the purpose of existence. The cliché advice equivalent of the 2008 housing market states, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Unfortunately, they left out the part where words can tie a knot in your stomach like a Charley Horse in the depths of your calf after you respond to "Would you like some coffee?" with "I'm doing good." Now, I know what you must be thinking. "You're just incredibly socially awkward," and my response to that would be "Me too thanks." That does not, however, discount the fact that churches breed awkward social interaction like the returning World War II vets bred children in the late 1940s. With that being said, here are a few of the foolproof ways to make the socially awkward gunshot feel more like a light stab wound.

Most churches like to establish the tone of the morning early. It usually begins with the greeters. A select few

who are "on fire for the Lord," or as I would like to call them, "charred beyond recognition for the Lord," welcome you with the flaming intensity of a thousand prodigal suns. Now, common decency would have you believe that a pleasant smile followed by a friendly "good morning!" is the best course of action in this situation. Common decency would be wrong. What you are going to want to do in this situation is keep your head low and under no circumstances respond to their greetings. Imagine you are an American infantryman who has been cut off from the rest of his platoon in the remote jungles of Northern Vietnam. Every greeter may or may not be a member of the Viet Cong, and making the slightest bit of noise could very well lead to your certain demise. If you make it past this part without speaking or making eye contact you have succeeded.

The next hurdle is going to be your biggest. Most churches like to have a time in the service where you shake hands and greet the people around you. This is the socially awkward equivalent of drifting through a minefield on the world's widest concrete sled. This situation requires a lot of attention to detail, and it may take years of attending church services for the express purpose of rehearsing basic social interaction to master. To start off, let everyone around you engage in conversation first. Do not move. Do not make eye contact. Scientists have found that elderly churchgoers can smell socially reluctant teenagers from up to three miles away. You are prey, so make

yourself as small as possible. However, social interaction is inevitable. After a few seconds of awkward social interaction with the people around you, they will feel the incessant need to personally inject their social malaria into your bloodstream. When this happens, don't panic. There are a few stock phrases that every church conversation begins with, so pay attention and do not mix up your stock responses. For instance, never respond to the phrase "How are you" with "You too." This can be a fatal blow for anyone. Side effects range from an awkward silence to the legitimate consideration of committing seppuku with the church handout. If you do manage to commit social suicide, just remember that messing up like that is like having a child from a one night stand. It probably did not take too long, and you will live with the crushing weight of your mistake for the next eighteen years. This, however, is a doomsday scenario. Usually the stock responses will get you through this part if you are not completely socially inept, but it wouldn't hurt to put in a word or two with the man upstairs during the allotted time for prayer.

Making it this far without making a blunder is the social equivalent of bowling the perfect game, or, in most people's cases, the social equivalent of being a normal human being. Do not let this false sense of confidence fool you. For the night is dark and full of communion. The tradition in every church is different. In most Baptist or non-denominational churches you can

get away with sitting in your seat and snacking on some gluten free crackers and Welch's grape juice, but you have to be especially careful at Anglican churches. I don't know if the practice is common across all Anglican churches, but usually they have stock phrases prepared for you so you do not mess this up. Definitely do not respond to the phrase "May the Lord be with you" with "Thank you." That is a rookie mistake that will cost you at least three quizzical looks from church elders and other churchgoers over the course of the service. Make sure that no matter what is offered to you, you take it. It doesn't matter that you believe that Satan forged the universe through the fiery furnace of Hades. Take the damn communion. It is all about drawing as little attention to yourself as possible, and nothing draws attention quite like admitting you're devil's spawn by not accepting free bread and juice.

If you have survived the communion, you've almost made it. Some churches I have gone to have a time at the end to meet and greet as well. No matter who you're with, encourage the heaven out of them to book it straight for the doors. If you cannot draw them away from the Medusa-like gaze of friendly church faces, then excuse yourself to the bathroom. After about fifteen minutes of sitting in the stall watching a fifteen minute long YouTube video of husky puppies playing with a tennis ball, you will receive a text message asking about your whereabouts. As you're leaving, keep your head down.

Clean-cut twenty-somethings in flannel will bombard you with church seminars with trendy names like “Impact” and “Global” like the German machine gun fire on the beaches of Normandy. Once you’ve made it to the parking lot, you have survived another week. Make sure to exhale, wipe the sweat from your neck, and unclench your teeth. It’s time to celebrate. Try drowning your sorrows in the warm grease of a Wendy’s Baconator, and prepare for next week’s imminent battle.

Laondon Finke

An Ode to a Failure (A Song of Myself)

Colton Greganti

Disdain of man spills from a rotten tooth.
In the face of love man's success shall pale.
Did Keats matter to the sweet Nightingale?
No, but a tragic hand must seek its truth,
Work to recover what was lost at youth,
And forget not, man has an unjust scale.
The surface of the soul is blatant braille.
Even the blindest man can feel its ruth.
Still, praises of man I refuse to hear.
The song of one's self is much more divine.
Never I found man's success to be mine.
I've kept my raven and cast out their dove.
It's myself I fail, but I persevere.
That is how I know that I truly love.

Colton Greganti

A Garden of Rose Colored Dresses

Olivette Petersen

She fell in love with the roses
Always on her mother's bedside table.
She plucked three fresh blooms
From the garden, and tied them tight
With a satin ribbon she found
In her grandmother's cabinet.

Mother scolded her torn dress
Ripped in pursuit of the perfect rose
Her calves ruddy with soil
Her hair unbraided by the bush's thorns.
She hid her tears from her mother,
And learned to never grow dirty from adventure
To stay patient and lady-like in pursuit of love
Rest in contention with another's roses.
Never pick your own.

She wandered for years
In rose colored dresses
Hoping to inspire a lover's gift -
A wondrous bouquet.
She spent a lifetime floating
In dissatisfaction, needing someone
To provide what she denied herself.
gentle and soft, she learned
that beauty is unhappiness
loveliness is betrayal of desire
And she hid her envy from every rose she passed.

Olivette Petersen

Names Carved in Trees

Kipp O'brian Wilkinson

In loneliness exists deep peace,
an ending to conflicts that
were never written an end.

I stood amongst towering pines
rising from snow covered ground,
reading our names on oak bark.

The axe bit into the wood,
my eyes saw the forest around me
as I gathered the kindling.

Kipp O'brian Wilkinson

Selling Souls

Heather Peckham

"I'm scared." I said with trembling lips. I looked wildly around at the scalpels, saws, and other medical instruments of torture. My frantic blood pumped faster and faster underneath the restraints on my wrists and ankles. I thought I was ready for this, but the bullets of sweat dotting my forehead told me otherwise.

"Don't worry sweetie," a nurse assured while looming over me, "it takes less than a minute, I promise."

"Yes. Although unusual, it is a very safe procedure. Nothing to worry about," a doctor said while putting on his gloves.

"But, I liked being in the lab with the others." I argued.

"Liked" was a funny word.

"Content" would have been more accurate. Besides the friends I made with the others, what was there to genuinely like about being a test-tube child? The lab. The paperwork. The experiments. We never had a taste of the real world we got to hear about from time to time. If one of us actually set foot outside of the lab, it would be only to endure one more inevitable hardship... the donations. This time though, was no ordinary donation.

We were raised to know that this was just protocol of our existence. Everyone got called up once in a while. I had many test-tube friends that went aboveground for either a blood transfusion or a kidney donation. I even knew a man who donated his finger.

Apparently his Origin got in some drunken bar fight. No matter what, all of these people came back to the lab at the end of the day. Wounds wrapped. Slightly sedated. But they were fine. They were safe. They were home.

I wasn't going to come home.

I swallowed hard. "Couldn't I just donate a kidney, or a lung... I wouldn't even mind giving up a few limbs or..." the nurse and doctors were shaking their heads before I could even finish. I was fighting a losing battle.

"No, dear. I'm afraid not," The nurse said. "You see, your Origin, Katherine... she's in a terrible state. The car accident mangled her entire body. Donating an arm isn't going to fix anything. She's going to need all of you. And it's an honor, really. You're one of the few clones that get to experience the phenomena of this procedure. You are ground-breaking science."

My heart dropped. Fear took over my entire body. Suddenly, I didn't trust these doctors the way I used to when I came up for routine check-ups. I felt myself shy away from them with a strange sense of betrayal looming over me. What was the matter with me? This was my life. This was why I was created. This was my biggest chance to stand out and to prove the significance of my existence. To provide the ultimate sacrifice.

"But a memory transplant... will I, you know, still be there?" I asked in a small voice.

The nurse did not answer right away, as if choosing her words carefully would

help the already hellish situation. “Well, of course you will be there. It is your body. Well, a prototype of Katherine’s body if you want to be politically correct. But when it comes to your consciousness and memories, you will gently fade away while hers is reanimated. It’s quicker and easier than falling asleep.”

I became more uncomfortable with every word that dribbled out of her mouth. I knew sacrificing myself was the right thing for me to do, but I was still uneasy with the procedure. I didn’t want to disappear. What would happen? Would my soul just float up in space? Would my existence be missed at all? Would I really be making a difference in the world? What was the use in being in that world if I couldn’t experience it for myself? Maybe this was a mistake. Maybe I wasn’t ready for such a commitment....

The restraints tightened over my wrists and ankles as I frantically attempted to slither out of them. My adrenaline masked the pain of what I knew would become bruises on Katherine’s new body. A sick part of me wanted to bruise all of Katherine’s precious skin and break her precious bones. I wanted her new body to be momentarily unusable so that I would have more time to gather my thoughts, or rather have time to bask in the luxury of having my own thoughts at all.

Before I could resist any further I felt an agonizing pinch in the back of my head. “Ow!” I winced, “What was that?”

“That was the only pain you will be feeling today, Test Subject 5329,” a

doctor cooed while sanitizing the giant needle that had just punctured my scalp. “Do not be alarmed by the numbness in your head and the heaviness you may be feeling in your body. This is just to ensure that you don’t move during the operation. Now, it is vital that you stay awake during this entire procedure. You may close your eyes and relax, but you must answer any question Nurse Debora asks. Do you understand?”

“Yes....” I managed to slur with slacking jaw and tears cascading down my cheeks. I felt absolutely nothing. My entire body went so limp and still, I wondered if it was still there or if it vanished into oblivion. Maybe this was what it would be like to not exist. Maybe this was what “being there, but not really there” actually meant.

I lifted my eyes back to the nurse smiling down at me. I could barely hear her ask me what my name was. Everything sounded as if I were under water. I swallowed down the numbness and answered, “My name is Lorena. Scientifically known as Test Subject 5329.”

All at once, billions upon billions of foreign images flooded my vision. Startled by this, I quickly squeezed my eyes shut, just to find more images filing before me in my own personal darkness. I heard the nurse ask my name again.

“Lorena, Test Subject 5329.”

“Lorena,” the doctor said, “You must remember to relax. Let it overcome you. Do not fight it.”

Breathing in and out slowly, I began to let go of my anxiety and

become mesmerized with the memories spreading out before me.

There I was riding a bike. I must have been very young, because the whole world seemed so oversized and annoyingly happy. I was riding closer and closer to a well-dressed man with grey eyes and wavy black hair, just like mine. His arms were wide open awaiting my embrace. My dad! No, wait. Not my father. *Katherine's* father.

"What is your name?"

"Uh, Lorena, Test Subject 53...

Umm...."

The scene changed and turned into a cozy living room with a grand fireplace. A big box with vibrant green and red wrapping paper was placed in front of me. My small hands tore greedily until the box was finally open. The fluffiest kitten I have ever seen poked its head out and gazed right into my eyes. Excitement exploded in my chest as I scooped the small animal and nuzzled it against my face. This was my favorite Christmas gift.... No. *Katherine's* favorite Christmas gift. What was Christmas anyway?

"What is your name?"

"Lorena. A test subject."

I was then staring down at the keys of a grand piano. Hot lights were pouring over me as I collected myself. This was not my first recital, but I always got so sickly nervous before I had to perform anything in front of a group of people. Dad always told me to just imagine that the people watching were in their underwear. That would always take the edge off any performance anxiety. I smiled a little and began to feel my fingers—no *Katherine's* fingers—dance flawlessly over the ivories. It wasn't but a moment later that I was bowing in front

of a cheering audience.

"What is your name?"

"...Lorena?"

I was on a beautiful school campus. The stone buildings towered over me like the castles I used to read about when I was younger. Lush grass surrounded my favorite—umm, *Katherine's* favorite high-heeled boots. I was obviously much older now. Maybe college-aged? I was sitting on a bench with a handsome man. He had dazzling blue eyes and curly locks of brown hair that flopped just above his eyebrows. He turned his head at me and caught me staring at him once again. Embarrassed, I put my head down to hide my blood-red cheeks. His gentle hand caressed my chin and pulled my face one inch away from his and....

"What is your name?"

"Kath—Lore—...."

The stone bench turned into a cushioned car seat. My hands were gripping the steering wheel so tightly that my knuckles turned snow-white. I felt myself arguing at the top of my lungs, but I had no idea what I was saying. I whipped my head towards the passenger's seat and saw the same handsome man from the scene before. The urgency in his voice and fire in his eyes startled me. We were on some sort of mission.... That must have explained why my car was easily accelerating over 100 miles per hour. I looked beyond the fog and saw a familiar building. *Katherine* did not know what she was looking at, but I did. It was the unmistakable structure of the Organ Transplants and Research Lab. It was... my home.

I did not even notice anything hit us until we were spiraling out of control

and flipping multiple times into a ditch. I wanted to scream but my breath was caught in my throat. Metal pierced into my body as easily as a knife into butter. Never before had I felt such agony in every ounce of my being. The car crushed me to the freezing cold earth. Hot, sticky blood oozed out of my shredded body. I could feel liquid fill my shattered lungs and suffocate the little consciousness I had left.

“What is your name?”

I am speechless, I thought.

I am breathless, I presumed.

I am lifeless, I realized.

“I am Katherine.” I stated.

Heather Peckham

Wasted Time

Sarah Corder

Mama was like our house in many ways -
rotting from the inside,
nearly condemned,
disheveled, disorganized, and in a continuous state of disrepair.

I can still see it,
the night that now torments my days -
the first night she stormed in that house,
stumbling, stammering, and unstable.

Her slurred speech and unforgiving jabs flowed
into my room as if she were the sea
and the waves that were once held back by the door
now crashed against my bedroom walls.

As she blundered closer, collapsing
onto my bed laughing and clinging to her final moments of consciousness,
the strike of her hand against my thigh
transfixed my entire body, and I crumbled like a shattered statue.

Mama reeked of the bar; the aroma a combination
of cheap whiskey, menthol cigarettes, and cologne encompassed her.
All she once swore against was now glued to her figure
like the revealing Lycra dress she wore.

I pressed the glass against my lips
and tasted the satisfying burn it left in the pit of my stomach.
My insides scorched and singed after our fiery confrontations
as I fell further into the flames,

Every sip bringing me closer to her.

Sarah Corder

Immortality

Olivette Petersen

Put on your favorite shade of lipstick
and go out into the world a whirlwind of expectations
begging for recognition
So that before the light goes dark you've left behind
a million glances
a million memories
a million neurons saturated with your image.

Scratch your name in every wet sidewalk.
Go to every party
make your rounds and
take a thousand pictures
so nobody forgets you were there.

Always be the first to say hello
and consider every person you meet an asset
a new friend to be made
a mind to be conquered.
Burrow your way inside and make of them
a seat filler at your 21st birthday party,
someone to sing praises at your funeral.

And let no mediocre deed go unnoticed.
Share with everyone a piece of yourself they'll admire.
Conceal the rest.
Make of yourself a mirage
a universal key to everyone's enjoyment.
And when you leave them behind,
they'll be so enraptured trying to put together your pieces,
You'll never be forgotten.

Olivette Petersen



VISUAL ART

Athene Ruiz

Phones

Athene Ruiz
Digital Print
2016



Athene Ruiz

John Le

Alpha Climb

John Le
Print
2015

Men, join this year's Alpha Climb!
This year we will be traversing
Mount McKinley.

The annual Alpha Climb is a tradition
dating back to 1869. The task is to be the
first to reach the top of a predetermined
summit. On the way, you will face many
challenges and obstacles. This is the
ultimate challenge of endurance. There
are many ways of reaching the summit,
but remember that killing other
contestants is no longer allowed.

As tradition follows, reaching the
summit first will grant you an
opportunity to mate with a pre-selected
partner. We assure that your potential
partner is going to produce genetically
perfect offspring.

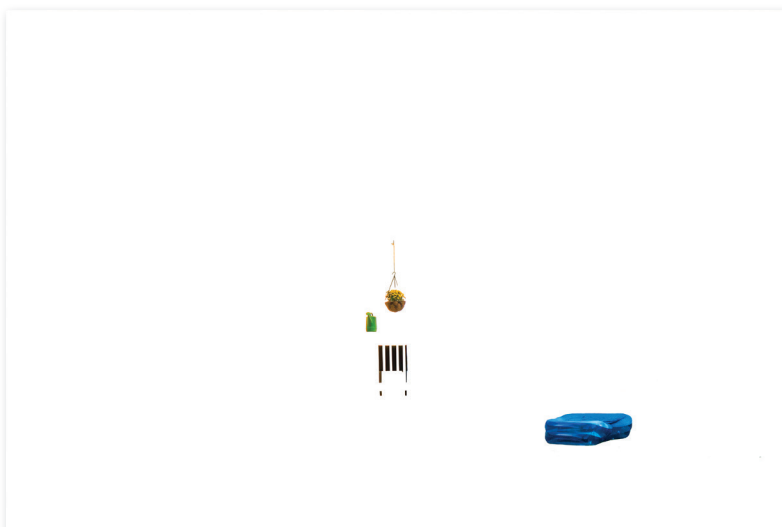
Sign-up at:
www.AlphaClimb.com/alaska

John Lee

Amy Devan

Porch-raits

Amy Devan
Print
2016



Amy Dean

Sarah Bowers

Untitled

Sarah Bowers
Mixed media
2016



Sarah Bowers

Abigail Lewis

From Above

Abigail Lewis
Photograph
2016



Abigail Lewis

Abigail Lewis

The Bushebis

Abigail Lewis
Photograph
2016



Abigail Lewis

Alesha Lee

30 seconds in

Alesha Lee
Digital drawing
2017



Alesha Lee

Ashley Whitaker

Untitled

Ashley Whitaker
Photograph
2016



Ashley Whitaker

Caroline Romersa

Untitled

Caroline Romersa
Digital
2016

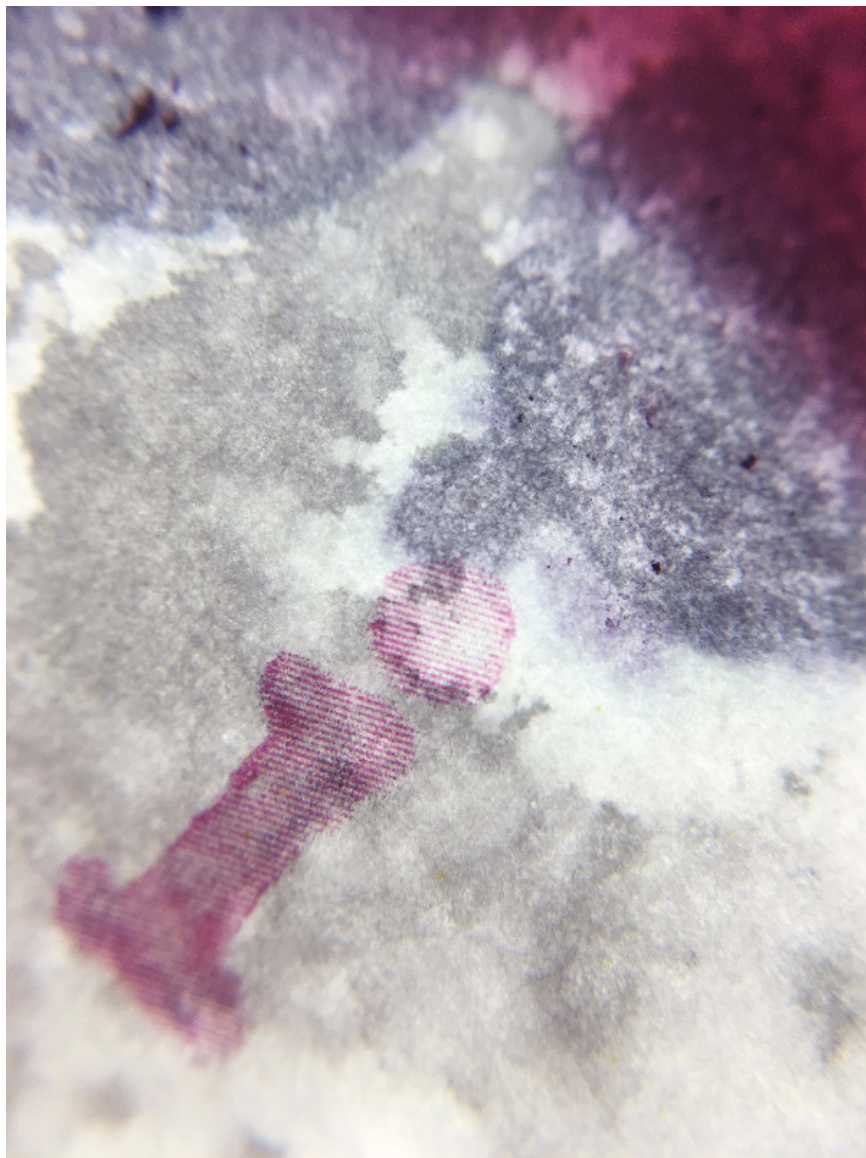


Caroline Romersa

Emma Delevante

Bleached

Emma Delevante
Mixed media
2016

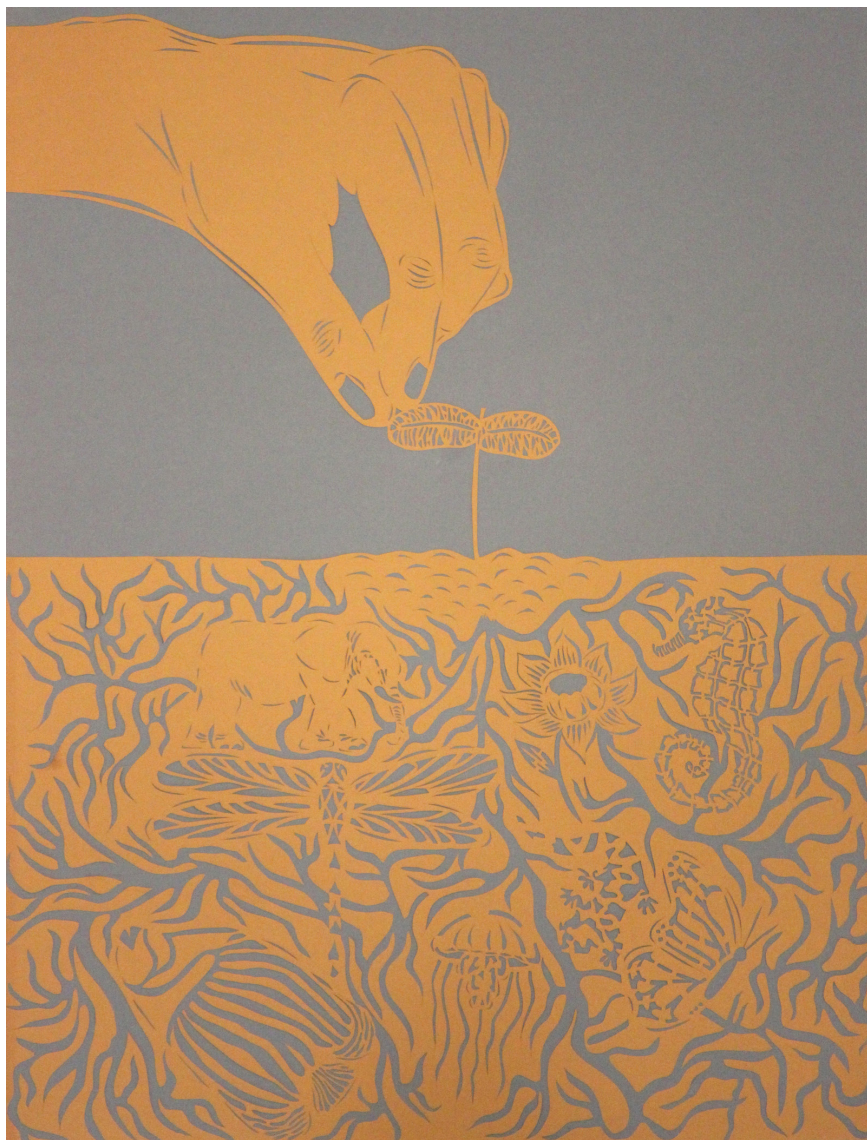


Emma Delevante

Karina Jensen

The Smallest Actions Have The Biggest Impact

Karina Jensen
Cut paper
2016



Karina Jensen

Kyle Neach

Luxury IV

Kyle Neach
35 mm film
2016



Kyle Neach

Kyle Neach

Pool

Kyle Neach
Photograph
2016



Kyle Neach

Lori McNabb

Self Portrait

Lori McNabb

Drawing

2015

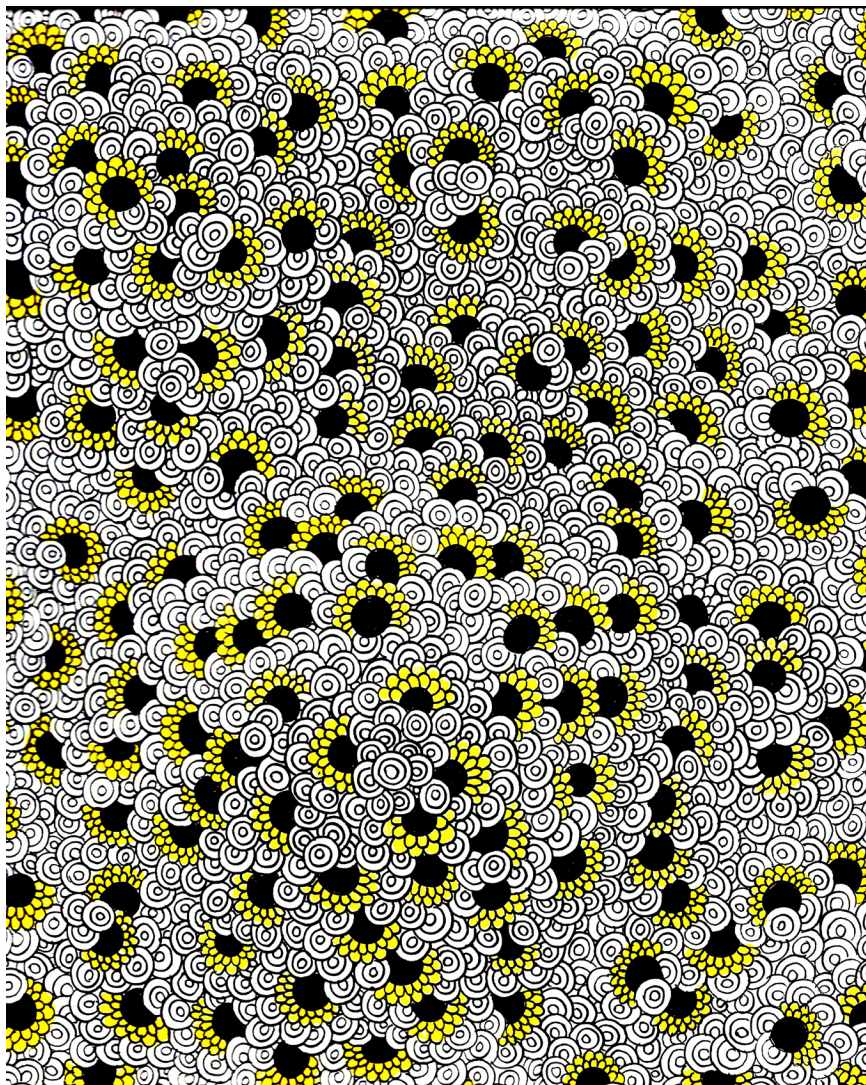


Lori McNabb

Lori McNabb

Yellow

Lori McNabb
Drawing
2015



Lori McNabb

Mica Morgan

Untitled

Mica Morgan
Painting
2016



Mica Morgan

Madeline Hankins

Untitled
Madeline Hankins
Print
2015



Madeline Hankins

Until next year...